



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Washington, D.C. 20503

October 27, 2014

Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
201 W. Preston St.  
Baltimore MD 21202

Dear Dr. Sharfstein:

Thank you for the chance to discuss overdose prevention strategy with you, your team, and local health leaders at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on Thursday. It was clear that Maryland is assigning the highest priority to addressing the overdose epidemic affecting many states in our nation. There is much many other states can learn from your efforts.

I was very impressed by Maryland's efforts to:

- Collect, analyze, and publish data on overdose, and share data across multiple systems;
- Make the antidote naloxone available broadly, with training programs across the state;
- Support broad access to effective and evidence-based care for opioid addiction, including treatment with methadone and buprenorphine;
- Coordinate law enforcement and public health efforts;
- Make data on prescriptions widely available through your Prescription Drug Monitoring Program; and
- Develop innovative, local programs to fight addiction and overdose.

I was especially impressed with coordinated efforts in Maryland to provide immediate to support to patients when physicians who are prescribing pain medications lose their licenses. I also found the presentation by Cecil County officials on the Local Overdose Fatality Review Team compelling. By bringing a broad group of local officials and experts together, Cecil County is learning the lessons of each overdose to build better systems and prevent future tragedies. I understand this program is now spreading around your state. I would like to find a way to educate other states about this creative and important effort.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy stands ready to assist Maryland in any way. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Botticelli  
Acting Director